



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
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Memorandum

TO: Chief Executive Officers, Massachusetts Acute Care Hospitals

FROM: Elizabeth Daake Kelley, MPH, MBA, Director
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

SUBJECT: Process to Transfer Hospital Intensive Care Unit Patients When There is a Surge in Demand for ICU Beds

DATE: April 28, 2020

As part of ongoing response to COVID-19 and to address the potential influx of patients with possible or confirmed novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) exposure or symptomology to hospital intensive care unit (ICU) beds, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is issuing this guidance to acute care hospitals that experience a surge in demand for their ICU beds. When requested, the Department is committed to supporting hospitals experiencing a surge by supporting the transfer of patients to another hospital.

If a hospital experiences a surge, meaning it is reaching capacity within its ICU beds, including those beds identified in the surge capacity, and needs to transfer patients out to another hospital's ICU space, the hospital should do the following:

1. Identify the name and title of the hospital administrator or designee who is seeking the transfer of patients;
2. Notify the DPH 24/7 on-call Duty Officer at pager number 617-339-8351;
3. Consult the WebEOC page, <https://mdph.webeocasp.com/mdph> to review available ICU bed capacity at all Massachusetts acute care hospitals and determine the appropriate acute care hospital to transfer to based on capacity, geography and ability to care for the patient; and
4. Contact the identified, appropriate hospital to arrange a transfer.

DPH expects all Massachusetts hospitals to collaborate on finding clinically appropriate care for patients during this emergency. Should a hospital experience difficulty finding a receiving hospital for patients, notify the Duty Officer and the Department will work with the hospital administrator to identify an appropriate location to transfer patients.

DPH continues to work with state, federal and local partners on the outbreak of COVID-19, caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, and we continue to appreciate the essential role you have in responding to this evolving situation.

DPH strongly encourages all hospitals in Massachusetts to monitor the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) website and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for up-to-date information and resources:

- CMS website: <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>

Additionally, please visit DPH's website that provides up-to-date information on COVID-19 in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>.